



August 2004

**GET OPERATING ON THESE HOT  
AUGUST NIGHTS**

**THE AUGUST VOMARC MEETING WILL BE AT THE SONOMA  
DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER, MC DOUGAL HALL, THIS  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, AT 7:30 P.M.**

**FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL**

I have always wanted to see the Oshkosh air show and this year I finally made it. I was invited to join the camp with many other airplane loving Sonomans. The camp was called "Sally's Alley." As usual, Darrel did his magic cooking great breakfasts. With about 175,000 people a day and 10, 000 airplanes, this is the biggest event of its kind in the world.

I did find the ham station manned by members of the local Oshkosh club. I was invited to operate, but only made one QSO. Darrel can speak of his aeronautical mobile operating.

Some good news on the BPF front. The trial period in Raleigh, NC will be shut down. "Currently, the company does not have plans for a large-scale commercial rollout of BPL in the company's service territories," the memorandum states. Progress Energy's decision comes on the heels of announced shutdowns of BPL field trials in Penn Yan, New York, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Maybe a few battles won, but the war isn't over. If you can, send the ARRL a donation to keep the fight going. For more info, go to <http://www.arrl.org/bpl>. Thanks to all who helped out with the Liberty Ride event. It

was well organized and went smoothly.

Our next and last event is the Vintage Festival on September 26. Please let me know if you can help out. This parade is not as long as the 4th of July, so should have about 10db less of stress.

John, W6TWQ, is doing a great job with the club history. If you have any old newsletters from the club's beginning or any other items that might be of historical interest, please see that John gets a copy. This month's meeting on the 18th at McDougle hall. Hope to see you all there. Keep the bands active.

73, Jim

### **AIR MOBILE TO OSHKOSH**

My granddaughter, Ashley, KG6LJP, and I left for the Experimental Airplane Association fly-in in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on Wednesday, July 21, in our 1948 Stinson Station Wagon 108-3. We were planning to stop at the Pietenpol fly-in in Brodhead, Wisconsin, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and then make the short flight up to Oshkosh on Sunday.

I had talked with Jim, K6UUW, about making HF contacts on the way. Two years earlier Ashley and I had made our first trip to Oshkosh with the Stinson, and I had installed an antenna similar to the one originally equipped by the factory. We had used a Ten Tec 555 Scout

HF transceiver to make about twenty contacts during that trip, including ones with Steve, K2IYQ, Jim, K6UUW, and other Sonoma hams.

I had installed an ICOM 706 MKIIG and LDG automatic antenna tuner for this trip. The Ten Tec had worked fine, but had been cumbersome to use, since I had to reach behind me to grab the rig, then tune it and transmit while holding it on my lap. The ICOM allowed me to mount the detachable face on the dash so the radio was as easy to use as my aircraft com rigs.

I made my first calls while climbing out to clear the Sierras and worked a few stations before turning the rig off to concentrate on flying through the mountains. Ashley tried making a few contacts over the Nevada desert, but the turbulence made it uncomfortable so the first day didn't see much operating.

We continued operating on and off during the trip to Oshkosh, then up to North Dakota and on to Seattle before heading home. Ashley made a great contact while we were over the Rockies above Montana with an older ham from Texas who had owned and flown a Stinson 108-3 years before. I had a nice long QSO with a commercial pilot flying private jets out of El Paso who turned out to have nearly every fixed and rotor wing rating available.

All in all a great trip. I'll go through my log and write more about airborne mobile operations in a future newsletter.

73, Darrel, WD6BOR

### **HAM RADIO HAS MAJOR ROLE IN AT-SEA RESCUE DRAMA**

Amateur Radio operators in the US, French Polynesia and Australia played a vital role in the successful late-June rescue of a couple aboard a privately owned sailboat in the Pacific Ocean. The drama began June 25 after John Caine, VK4CEJ, in Queensland, Australia, checked into the Pacific Seafarers Net on 14.313 MHz with emergency traffic from the 47-foot sailing ketch Fingolfin, some 680 nautical miles north of Nuka Hiva in the Marquesas Islands of French Polynesia. A young Australian couple, John and Kelly Hallows, were on their way from Mexico to the Marquesas. With the trip taking longer than anticipated, however, John Hallows had run out of a required medication and was experiencing debilitating pain. Through Maritime Mobile Service Net (MMSN <http://www.mmsn.org>) member Bob Botik, K5SIV, in Austin, Texas, the US Coast Guard in Honolulu and a shipping firm, arrangements were made for a Greek container vessel to rendezvous with the Fingolfin and transfer the needed medication.

Unfortunately, the larger vessel struck and badly damaged the ketch during the transfer. To add insult to injury, the medication transferred turned out to be the wrong one. Eventually several other radio amateurs became part of the unfolding drama, but Botik found himself as a key player.

The Coast Guard was in touch with the French Navy to effect a rescue, but the situation aboard the Fingolfin continued to deteriorate. John Hallows was no longer able to assist in piloting the damaged vessel, and his wife, injured during the collision with the container vessel, was in pain and exhausted. Both also were suffering symptoms of dehydration. An hourly radio schedule with the Fingolfin was maintained, with stations staying on frequency after the MMSN shut down.

Due to the couple's condition, evacuation became imperative. A French Navy patrol vessel came on 14.300 MHz to advise it was on its way to the Fingolfin's last-known position. Via VK4CEJ and K5SIV, a series of questions and answers to and from the Fingolfin were relayed to the patrol boat.

The Fingolfin's situation continued to worsen. The vessel was taking on water and eventually lost both masts and its only lifeboat. Amateurs on frequency advised the Fingolfin to stay on frequency no matter what.

A few hours later, the increasingly stressed, demoralized and desperate couple made contact with Gary Walls, KE6SD/mm, aboard the S/V Amidon Light in Suvarrow Atoll and with Bill Healy, N6JRD/mm, in the Pacific. The two amateurs attempted to lift their spirits to get them through the crisis. The French patrol boat finally reached the Fingolfin on June 27 and took the couple aboard, but the sailboat had to be scuttled. The couple was hospitalized and later released. Botik received a letter of appreciation in July from Rear Adm C. D. Wurster of the US Coast Guard in Honolulu. "Your efforts and skills in radio communications directly resulted in the safe rescue of two personnel," Wurster said. He also applauded Botik's "unselfish devotion and commitment to aiding others in distress."

A more detailed account of the Fingolfin rescue is available on the MMSN Web site  
 <<http://mmsn.org/events/fingolfin.htm>>.

## THE VOMARC WIRELESS

### VOLUME 8 EDITION 8

A publication of VOMARC, the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club - W6AJF

Frank C. Jones - W6AJF

Honorary President in Perpetuity

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jim Hill, K6UUW - President

George Maurer, K6ITE - Vice-Pres  
 Joan Brady, W6WXU - Secretary  
 Ken McTaggart, N6KM - Treasurer  
 Eileen Adams, KG6QNT, Membership Chair  
 Mike Miller, WB6TMH - Radio Officer  
 Ken McTaggart, N6KM - ACS  
 Jan Bush, AE6FQ - Webmeister  
 Darrel Jones, WD6BOR - Editor

***Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.***

**CLUB MEETINGS** are held on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating between McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, Eldridge, and the Sonoma Fire Station, 630 2<sup>nd</sup> Street West, Sonoma. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

### WEB PAGE:

<http://www.vomarc.org/>

**Nets** are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600 kHz, PL 88.5 Hz.

**ACS** holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

**PACKET STATION INFO:** The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as "SNV1EC". "SNVGW" can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is "SNVND".

**CLUB BREAKFASTS** are held on the first Saturday of each month at Issa's Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

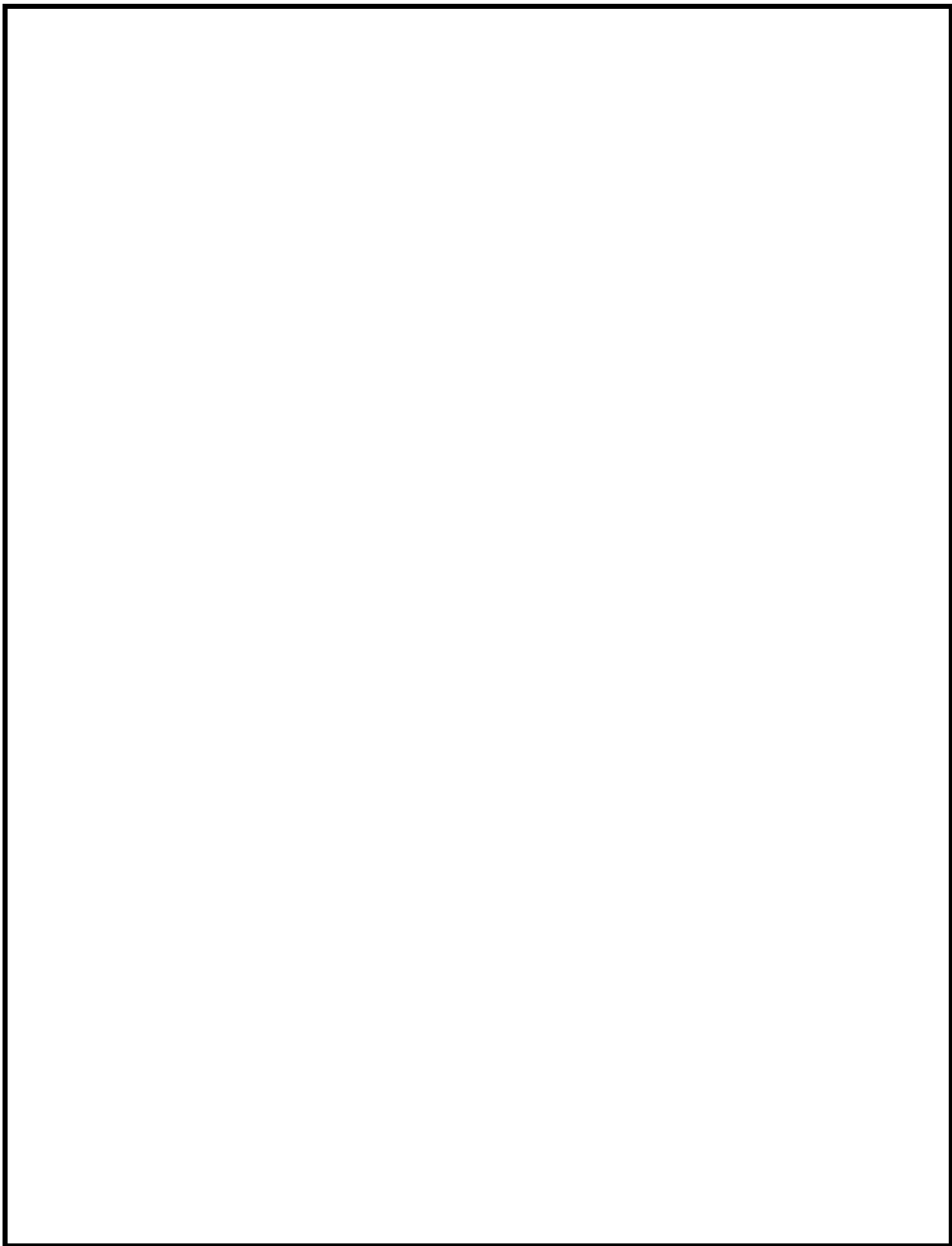
Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

WD6BOR@VOM.COM

**Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.**

175 First Street West

Sonoma, CA 95476



**Valley of the Moon  
ARC  
1496 Nut Tree Lane  
Cupertino, CA 95014**

**NOTICE!!! THE NEXT VOMARC MEETING IS  
WEDNESDAY, august 18, AT 7:30 P.M. AT MCDOUGAL  
HALL, SDC  
CU THERE!**

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**VOMARC MEMBERSHIP**

**VOMARC 2004** Membership Dues: \$10/year individual; \$5/year family member.

VOMARC encourages its members to join the ARRL. More information is available at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Call 1-800-424-8567.

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VOMARC: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Moment, From the Database Queen**

Please check the mailing label on this newsletter. It tells you when your VOMARC dues are due. Dues may be mailed to Ken N6KM, or Jim K6UUW, 1496 Nut Tree Lane, Sonoma, CA 95476, or brought to the next meeting. If there is any mistake, please do not shoot the messenger; email Eileen KG6QNT at Eileen@vom.com. Your check should be made payable to:

**VOMARC**